

735 constructively with the problem by establishing a special camp for  
 747 beggars. The police removed from the streets those found begging,  
 men, women and children, and handed them over to the Salvation  
 Army for care. Huts were erected on land made available by the  
 Council, and the scheme was inaugurated in January 1941. To  
 defray expenses of building the camp, the Council allocated funds  
 from the voluntary entertainment levy which had been collected  
 during the post-hostility period and handed over in part to the  
 Shanghai Refugee Relief Association for disbursement among  
 organisations caring for refugees.

735 IN GENERAL, as mentioned before, the Council took the view that  
 747 it was not able to provide "poor relief." Its revenues from taxation  
 633 were limited because its powers of taxation were restricted. No  
 166 poor law rate could be levied. It was argued that in a city to which  
 (because of the comparatively safe areas and the lure of possible  
 employment) thousands had drifted in past decades from nearby  
 densely populated provinces, to have embarked on poor relief  
 would have been to encourage the arrival of many more destitute  
 persons. In general, relief was left to private charitable organisa-  
 tions, both Chinese and foreign.

Nevertheless, the Council contributed to relief by presenting  
 grants-in-aid to hospitals and institutions caring for the destitute.  
 In particular, as we have seen, it made contributions to child wel-  
 fare institutions to care for the young people whom police removed  
 from the streets and otherwise found in need, and who very often  
 were without relatives or friends.

• 766 Much is made in certain studies of Shanghai of the "exposed  
 corpse" situation. Figures of unwanted corpses picked up on the  
 streets did not, however, represent necessarily deaths from starva-  
 tion and exposure only.<sup>2</sup> There were indeed many such cases, but  
 there were also many others where the family of the deceased  
 lacked funds for a coffin and other funeral expenses. Then it was  
 to a Chinese benevolent burial society that the family looked. In  
 such cases the corpse was placed where it would be collected and

<sup>2</sup> Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 46, reports that in the International Settlement alone over 100,000 exposed corpses were disposed of in 1938. In 1939 the figure was 72,000. The numbers in 1942 must have been very high. There were certain places in the city where those dying of disease and starvation 'dragged themselves, to die with their fellows.

## SOME SPECIAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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disposed of by the benevolent society or a public agency. The issue is at base that laboured sufficiently in preceding pages—low earnings of employed workers. 766

THERE IS A GROUP OF workers in Shanghai whose conditions of employment were such that the public called for special investigation of them. These are the pullers of public rickshas, one of the many groups of workers engaged in transportation—an industry which in China even prior to December 1941<sup>a</sup> depended more on human labour than on mechanized vehicles. The pullers of hand-carts, and those who use a pole on their shoulders for carrying loads, are also transportation workers, but there was little public interest in the latter groups, even though their work is in some respects as arduous as that of the ricksha pullers. 494 466 471

In 1933, at the suggestion of the Rotary Club, the Council undertook an enquiry into the working conditions of public ricksha pullers. This group of pullers does not own rickshas but hires them on a twelve-hour shift. The conviction of the community was that the pullers were being exploited by the owners of the rickshas or by their agents, sub-contractors through whom the rickshas were leased. The committee of enquiry examined the advisability of centralising the public ricksha industry in a utility company, and did in fact finally recommend that a beginning be made by the organisation of one company to operate a fleet of two thousand vehicles. The committee felt that little could be hoped for in the way of better care of vehicles and better conditions of operation for the pullers as long as the rickshas were owned by more than a thousand individuals.

It transpired that since the number of public rickshas was limited to about ten thousand, the Council's ricksha licence to operate a ricksha had acquired a fictitious value of several hundred dollars. Owners sought to recover as rent an investment return, not on the price of the ricksha and the cost of a licence, but rather on the money paid by them to the holder of a licence based on the enhanced value of the licence itself. Hence pullers were paying a rental out of all proportion to their earning capacity.

<sup>a</sup> After this date no further importations of gasoline took place and motor traffic disappeared largely from the streets except for vehicles on public service. Some were converted to be used with substitute fuels.